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## The House That Jack Built

A Story Of **Truxton King** By George Barr McCutcheon

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**SYNOPSIS OF FIRST CHAPTERS.**  
Truxton King, an American millionaire's son, tired of the humdrum life and sets out to have some adventures. He reaches the kingdom of Graustark.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

She sat down upon the doorstep, puffing away at a long pipe, her hooded face almost invisible from the distance which he resolutely held. She was no more than a black, inanimate heap of rags piled against the door jamb.

Hobbs let out a shout. The old woman arose and hobbled toward him, leaning upon a great cane.

"Where's Mr. King?" called out Hobbs.

Her arm was raised, a bony finger pointing to the treetops above her head.

"He's gone. Didn't you see him? He went off among the treetops. You won't see him again." She waited a moment and then went on in most ingratiating tones: "Would you care to come into my house? I can show you the road he took. You?"

But Mr. Hobbs, his hair on end, had dropped the rein of King's horse and was putting boot to his own beast, whirling frantically into the path that led away from the hated, damned spot. Down the road he crashed, pursued by witches whose persistence put to shame the efforts of those famed ladies of

Tam o' Shanter in the long ago. If he had looked over his shoulder he might have discovered that he was followed by a riderless horse, nothing more.

But a riderless horse is a gruesome thing sometimes.

### CHAPTER IX. STRANGE DISAPPEARANCES.

**B**UT Hobbs halted his mad flight. He decided to return to the hut. His friend might be in desperate need of aid.

Then, with his heart in his mouth, he slowly began to retrace his steps, walking where he had galloped a moment before. A turn in the road caused him to draw rein sharply. A hundred yards ahead five or six men were struggling with a riderless bay horse.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Hobbs. "It's his horse!"

As he drew nearer it struck him forcibly that the men were not what he had thought them to be. They were an evil looking lot, more like the strikers he had seen in the town earlier in the day. Even as he was turning the new thought over in his mind one of them stepped out of the little knot and, without a word of warning, lifted his arm and fired point blank at the little Englishman. A pistol ball whizzed close by his head. His horse leaped to the side of the road in terror, almost unseating him.

But Hobbs had fighting blood in his veins. What is more to the point, he had a Mauser revolver in his pocket. He jerked it out and, despite a second shot from the picket, prepared to ride down upon the party. An instant later half a dozen revolvers were blazing away at him. Hobbs turned at once and rode in the opposite direction, whirling to fire twice at the unfriendly group. Soon he was out of range. The only thing left for him to do was to ride at once to the city and give the alarm.

Suddenly his horse swerved and leaped furiously out of stride, stumbling, but recovering himself almost instantaneously. In the same second he heard the sharp crack of a firearm far

down the unbroken ravine to his left. A second shot came, this time from the right and close at hand. His horse was staggering, swaying; then down he crashed, Hobbs swinging clear barely in time to escape being pinned to the ground. A stream of blood was pouring from the side of the poor beast. Agast at this unheard of wantonness, the little interpreter knew not which way to turn, but stood there dazed until a third shot brought him to his senses. The bullet kicked up the dust near his feet. He scrambled for the heavy underbrush at the roadside and darted off into the road, his revolver in his hand, his heart palpitating like mad. Time and again as he fled through the dark thickets he heard the hoarse shouts of men in the distance.

At 10 o'clock the next morning Colonel Quinnox and a company of soldiers, riding up from the city gates toward the north in response to a call for help from honest herders who reported attacks and robberies of an alarming nature, came upon the stiff, footsore, thorn scratched Mr. Hobbs not far from the walls of the town. The colonel was not long in grasping the substance of Hobbs' revelations. He rode off at once for the witch's hovel, sending Hobbs with a small, instructed escort to the castle, where Baron Dangloss was in consultation with Mr. Tullis and certain ministers.

The city was peaceful enough, much to the surprise of Hobbs. No disturbance had been reported, said the guardsmen who rode beside him. Up in the hills there had been some depredations, but that was all.

"All?" groaned Mr. Hobbs. "All? Hang it all, man, wot do you call all? You haven't heard half of it yet. I tell you, there's been the devil to pay. Wait till the colonel comes back from Ganlook gap. He'll have news for you; take it from me, he will. That poor chap 'as gone up in smoke as sure as my name 's Hobbs."

They met Baron Dangloss near the barracks, across the park from the castle. He was in close, earnest conversation with John Tullis and Count Halfont, both of whom seemed laboring under intense excitement.

The arrival of Hobbs, a pitiful but heroic object, at once arrested the attention of every one. His story was heard by a most distinguished audience.

"There is nothing supernatural about King's disappearance," said Tullis sharply. "That's all nonsense. He had money about him, and it perhaps turns out that there really was a man at the crack in the door, a clever brigand who today has got the better of our vainglorious friend. The shooting in the hills is more disturbing than this, to my mind."

"This mystery coming on top of the other is all the more difficult to understand—I mean the disappearance of the Countess Marlanx," said Baron Dangloss, pulling at his imperial in plain perplexity. "But we must not stop here talking. Will you come with me, Mr. Tullis, to the tower? I shall

send out my best man to work on the case of the lady. It is a most amazing thing. I still have hope that she will appear in person to explain the affair."

"I think not," said Tullis gloomily. "This looks like abduction—foul play, or whatever you choose to call it. She has never left her father's house in just this manner before. I believe, baron, that Marlanx has taken her away by force. She told me yesterday that she would never go back to him if she could help it. I have already given you my suspicions regarding his designs upon the—ahem!" Catching the eager gaze of the prince, he changed the word "throne" to "treasury."

Lorraine, her cheeks white with resolution, turned upon John Tullis. "You might leave the rescue of the countess to the proper authorities—the police," she said calmly. "I think it is your duty as an American to head the search for Mr. King. If Count Marlanx has spirited his wife away, pray who has a better right?"

"But we are not sure that he"—

"We are sure that Mr. King is either dead or in dire need of help," she interrupted hotly.

"Colonel Quinnox is quite competent to conduct the search," he said shortly. "But Colonel Quinnox has gone forth on another mission. He may be unable to give any of his time to the search for Mr. King. It is outrageous, John Tullis, to refuse help!"

"I don't refuse help!" he exclaimed. "But I'll tell you this—I consider it my duty as a man to devote what strength I have to the service of a woman in trouble. Come, baron; we will go to the tower."

Count Halfont intervened, hastily proposing that a second party be sent out at once with instructions to raze the witch's hut if necessary.

"I shall be happy to lead the expedition," said young Count Vos Engo, bowing deeply to the young lady herself.

"You shall, Vos Engo," said Halfont. "Prepare at once. Take ten men."

Tullis turned suddenly to the resentful girl. "Lorraine," he said gently as the others drew away, "don't be hard with me. You don't understand."

"Yes, I do," she said stubbornly. "You are in love with her."

"Yes; that's quite true."

"A married woman?"

"I can't help it. I must do all I can for her."

She looked into his honest eyes for a moment.

"Forgive me," she murmured, hanging her head.

Then she smiled brightly up into his face. "Have your way, then. Remember that I am her friend too."

The guard about the prince was doubled. Orders requiring the strictest care of his person were issued by Count Halfont. Baron Dangloss began to see things in a different light. Things that had puzzled him before now seemed clear.

But late in the afternoon a telegram was brought to Tullis which upset all of their calculations and caused the minister of police to swear softly in pure disgust. It was from the Countess Marlanx herself, sent from Porvark, a station far down the railway. In the direction of Vienna. It was self explanatory: "I am going to Schloss Marlanx, there to end my days. There is no hope for me. I go voluntarily. Will you not understand why I am leaving Edelweiss? You must know. It was signed 'Ingomede'."

Tullis was dumfounded. He caught the penetrating glance of Dangloss and flushed under the sudden knowledge that this shrewd old man also understood why she was leaving Edelweiss. Because of him! Because she loved him and would not be near him. His heart swelled exultantly in the next moment. A brave resolve was born within him.

"We don't need a key to that, my boy," said the baron indulgently. "But I will say that she has blamed little consideration for you when she steals away in the dead of night without a word. Unfeeling, I'd say. Well, we can devote our attention to Mr. King, who is lost."

"See here, baron," said Tullis after a moment; "I want you to give me a couple of good men for a few days. I'm going to Schloss Marlanx. I'll get her away from that place if I have to kill Marlanx and swing for it!"

At 7 o'clock that night, accompanied by two clever secret service men, Tullis boarded the trap for the west. A

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shop on the station platform smiled quietly to himself as the train pulled out. Then he walked briskly away. It was Peter Brutus, the lawyer.

A most alluring trap had been set for John Tullis!

The party that had gone to Ganlook gap in charge of Count Vos Engo returned at nightfall no wiser than when it left the barracks at noon. Riding bravely, but somewhat dejectedly, beside the handsome young officer in command was a girl in gray. Now she was coming home with them, silent, subdued, dispirited—even more so than she allowed the count to see.

Colonel Quinnox and his men had been scouring the hills for bandits. They arrived at the witch's cabin a few minutes after Vos Engo and his company. Disregarding the curses of the old woman, a thorough search of the place was made.

The old woman's story, reflected by the grandson, was convincing so far as it went. She said that the young man remained behind in the kitchen to puzzle himself over the smoke mystery while she went out to her doorstep. The man with the horses became frightened when she went down to explain the situation to him. He fled. A few minutes later the gentleman emerged to find his horse gone, himself deserted. Cursing, he struck off down the glen in pursuit of his friend, and that was the last she saw of him.

(To Be Continued.)

## INSURANCE MEN ONLY BLUFFING

Not All Are Quitting, Hence Kickers Can Not Hurt Insurers

Austin, Texas, July 13.—The opinion is expressed in official circles here this afternoon that the action of a number of fire insurance companies instructing agents not to write policies covering risks included in the fire rating boards' recent order calling for a reduction, will be largely nullified because of the fact that there are forty of the largest and strongest insurance concerns which have not issued any such instructions. These forty concerns have accepted the terms fixed by the board.

For this reason the further opinion is expressed that fire insurance matters in Texas have not reached so bad a pass after all. It is pointed out that if the matter is left in status quo and if the special session does nothing on insurance, then insurance becomes largely a matter of competition between those companies willing to accept the board's reduction and those which directed their agents to write no more policies covering such risks.

It is fully believed that the special session of the legislature will take decided action, the opinion having been expressed variously that the entire insurance statute would be remodelled.

## PATRIOTIC AMERICANS IN TEPIC HOLD CELEBRATION

Banquet Governor Mariano Ruiz and Other Prominent Officials and Citizens

The Fourth of July was appropriately celebrated by the small but enthusiastic American colony in the mountain town of Tepic, Mex., capital of the territory of the same name. The hotel Bola de Ora, the chief headquarters for citizens of the republic north of the Rio Grande, was prettily and appropriately decorated, and a band discoursed patriotic and other airs throughout the day. That tide of sentiment which has pronounced against noise as not being in "good form" has not yet reached that elevation, and the noise of the popping of firecrackers was heard at intervals, unattended by casualties of any kind.

In the evening a banquet was given at the Bola de Ora, attended by Governor Ruiz, secretary Avina and other prominent citizens. The band rendered American patriotic airs, including "America" and "Marching Through Georgia," while all arose and listened with profound respect and pleasure to the excellent playing of the Mexican National anthem. After the banquet, which was thoroughly enjoyable, the guests adjourned to the upper corridor of the hotel, where music, singing and dancing served to pass a couple of hours most pleasantly.

The list of guests included: General Mariano Ruiz, Secretary Juan Avina, Lic. Morfin, Lic. Fernando S. Barra and Senorita Maria Luisa Ibarra, Lic. Antonio Garcia Esteveza, Dr. J. M. Hurley and wife, Albert Talbert and wife, Luis Morton and wife, Felix Wilson and wife, Henry Ruch and wife, Leon Constantine, Dr. Benj. Wallace, Albert Murphy, E. A. Rice, O. D. Jones, Abraham Ortiz, Ramon Menchaca, Angel Larrea, Jose Garcia, Enrique Talbert, J. C. Hunt, Henry Hain, I. S. Boraine, G. J. Holland, G. F. Weeks, R. N. Leggett, Alfredo Rivas, Lee Hunsinger and Frank Woulard.

The menu was strictly American and included fried oysters and roast turkey.

Treasury Department, office of the Secretary, Washington, D. C., June 23, 1910. Proposals are hereby solicited to be opened in the office of the Supervising Architect, Treasury Department, Washington, D. C., at 10 o'clock a. m. on August 2, 1910, for the sale or donation to the United States of a corner lot, approximately 25x100 feet, centrally and conveniently located and suitable for a new federal building site at El Paso, Texas. If there are streets on three sides of lot one dimension could be reduced forty feet.

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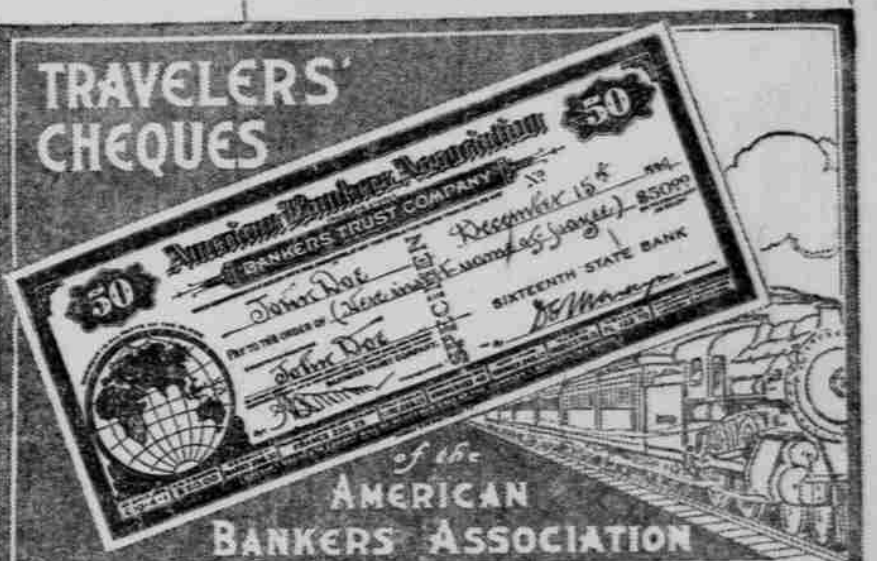
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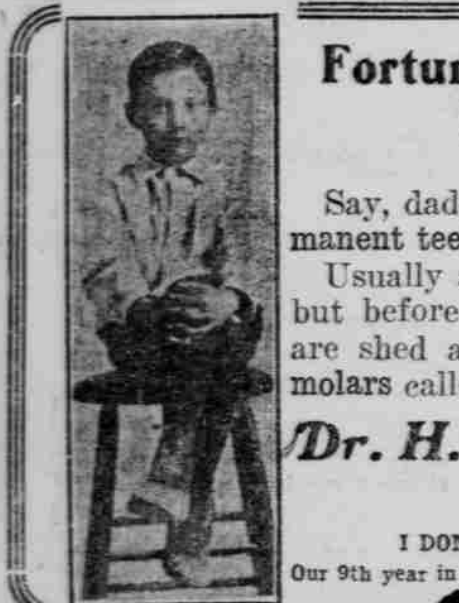
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## Fortunatus Questions His Daddy

Say, daddy, when do the first permanent teeth come through?

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